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SUBJECT: GEORGIA: PERMREP SEEKS US VIEWS ON FUTURE OF UNOMIG

Classified By: Ambassador Alejandro D. Wolff for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)
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¶1. (C) Summary. Georgian Permrep Alexander Lomaia told Ambassador DiCarlo on March 12 that Georgia would like to see the UN presence in Georgia/Abkhazia continue. It should include a peacekeeping force to patrol a demilitarized zone, an executive policing component, and a concrete mechanism for the return of IDPs. Lomaia had solicited views from other friends and allies on a new UN mandate and had some concerns about European resolve to retain a strong EU presence in Georgia in the event the UN mandate were to expire. Ambassador DiCarlo said it was important not only to have a clear understanding among Western allies of an ideal mandate, but also of our red lines on issues that affect understanding of Georgia's territorial integrity (e.g., name of the mission, location of UN offices, appearance of de facto authorities in New York, name of the UN report, name of the SC agenda item, etc.), since Russia would likely seek some concessions in these areas during a negotiation. Lomaia said that the most important issues for Georgia in this regard were: a reference to Res 1808; keeping the agenda item as, "The Situation in Georgia", having a Georgian representative present for the adoption of a resolution, and keeping the de facto Abkhaz authorities out of the Security Council. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) Georgian Permrep Alexander Lomaia and Deputy Permrep Irakli Chikovani sought Ambassador DiCarlo's views on March 12 on a new mandate for the UN mission in Georgia. (The mandate for the current mission expires on June 15, 2009. Resolution 1866 requests the Secretary-General (SYG) to submit a report by May 15 that would include recommendations for a future UN presence.) Lomaia said Tbilisi would like to see a continued UN presence in Georgia, and that in order for Tbilisi "to have confidence in the mission", it would need to include a peacekeeping force that would patrol a demilitarized zone, an executive policing component, and a concrete mechanism for returns of internally displaced persons (IDPs).

¶3. (C) Lomaia said he had already sought the views of UN SRSG for Georgia, Johan Verbeke, who has been tasked with drafting the recommendations for the May 15 SYG report, as well as with the French and German Permreps. Lomaia's impression was that Verbeke was considering a demilitarized zone of about 2.5 km on both sides of the Enguri River, with a larger "zone of confidence" of about 10 km in which there would be restrictions on the movement of troops and military equipment. Verbeke was also considering humanitarian and "confidence building" aspects to the mission, Lomaia believed.

¶4. (C) Lomaia was concerned, however, about the future relationship between the UN mission and the EU Monitoring Mission (EUMM), which is deployed only on the Georgian side of the administrative boundary between Abkhazia and Georgia-proper. French Permrep Ripert had told Lomaia that the termination of the UNOMIG mission could lead to the termination of the EUMM presence as well, since in that case

it would be difficult to convince EU members that the EUMM were still relevant. Ripert had also suggested that the UN role should be expanded to include monitoring in South Ossetia, and could become an umbrella for future EUMM activities. Lomaia was concerned about reports from German Permrep Matussek that the French had insisted on the removal of language from an early German draft of Res. 1886 that specifically endorsed the EUMM's monitoring role.

15. (C) Ambassador DiCarlo welcomed the initiative of Georgia to consider a new UN mandate, and encouraged Lomaia to continue to share his views with us. DiCarlo thought it important for Western allies to have a clear and unified understanding of an ideal UN mandate, but also thought we should also keep in mind that if Russia were to acquiesce to a more robust monitoring mechanism, it would likely also seek concessions from the West on questions such as the name of the mission or the appearance of Abkhaz de facto authorities in New York. DiCarlo asked Lomaia to consider Georgian redlines on these and other issues that could signal a change in the Security Council's understanding of Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

16. (C) Overall, DiCarlo thought capitals would need to play a strong role in defining a new UN mandate. She also thought it important that the SYG's report should be released with sufficient time to negotiate the terms of a new mission before the June 15 expiration of UNOMIG.

17. (C) Ambassador Lomaia said that the aspects of Georgia's territorial integrity which mattered most to Tbilisi would be: a reference to Resolution 1808 in any SC resolution

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related to Georgia; ensuring that the agenda item for the Security Council remained, "The Situation in Georgia"; ensuring that a representative from Georgia is invited to participate in the adoption of a resolution; and keeping representatives of the Abkhaz (and South Ossetia) de facto authorities out of the Security Council. Georgian Deputy Permrep Chikovani said he also believed Russia would insist that the name of the May 15 SYG's report reflect Resolution 1866, without any reference to Georgia. Lomaia acknowledged that these "redlines" were Tbilisi's "official positions", but that Georgia did not control the actions of the Security Council, and would need to be flexible.
Wolff